

Elizabeth Madox Roberts Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Prepared by Michael McElderry



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

2011

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2013

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Collection Summary

Title: Elizabeth Madox Roberts Papers

Span Dates: 1921-1941

ID No.: MSS37978

Creator: Roberts, Elizabeth Madox, 1881-1941

Extent: 500 items ; 10 containers ; 4 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Repository: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Abstract: Author, poet, and novelist. Drafts, notes, outlines, page proofs, and miscellaneous material relating to Roberts's novels, poetry, short stories, and miscellaneous writings.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

Roberts, Elizabeth Madox, 1881-1941.

Subjects

Agrarians (Group of writers)

American fiction--20th century.

American literature--Southern States.

American poetry.

Floods--Kentucky--Louisville.

Literature.

Short stories, American.

Places

Kentucky--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

Kentucky--History.

Louisville (Ky.)--History.

Southern States--Intellectual life--1865-

Occupations

Authors.

Novelists.

Poets.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Elizabeth Madox Roberts, author, poet, and novelist, were given to the Library of Congress, 1943-1944, by her brother Ivor S. Roberts acting on behalf of her estate. Supplements were given by Ivor S. Roberts and others, 1943-1972.

Processing History

The papers of Elizabeth Madox Roberts were arranged and described in 1944. Correspondence included in initial accessions was returned to the donor in 1960.

Additional Guides

The Roberts Papers are described in *Library of Congress Quarterly Journal of Current Acquisitions* 1, no. 2 (Oct.-Dec. 1943).

Transfers

An autographed printed copy of *In the Great Steep's Garden: Poems by Elizabeth Madox Roberts* has been transferred to the Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Elizabeth Madox Roberts is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Elizabeth Madox Roberts are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Elizabeth Madox Roberts Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1881, Oct. 30	Born, Perryville, Ky.
1900	Attended the University of Kentucky, Lexington, Ky., but was forced to drop out after one semester due to poor health
1900-1910	Taught school in rural towns in Kentucky
1915	Published <i>In the Great Steep's Garden</i> . Colorado Springs, Colo.: Gowdy-Simmons Publishing Co.
1917	Enrolled at the University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill., at the age of thirty six; developed friendships with and received assistance from a group of writers and artists, including Janet Lewis, Harriet Monroe, Glenway Wescott, Monroe Wheeler, and Yvor Winters
1921	Ph.B., University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.
1922	Published <i>Under the Tree</i> . New York: B. W. Huebsch Awarded Fiske Prize Awarded Fiske Prize
1926	Published <i>Time of Man</i> . New York: Viking Press
1927	Published <i>My Heart and My Flesh</i> . New York: Viking Press
1928	Published <i>Jingling in the Wind</i> . New York: Viking Press Awarded John Reed Memorial Prize
1930	Published <i>Great Meadow</i> . New York: Viking Press Awarded O. Henry Award
1931	Published <i>Buried Treasure</i> . New York: Viking Press
1932	Published <i>Haunted Mirror</i> . New York: Viking Press

1935	Published <i>He Sent Forth a Raven</i> . New York: Viking Press
1938	Published <i>Black Is My Truelove's Hair</i> . New York: Viking Press
1940	Published <i>Song in the Meadow</i> . New York: Viking Press
1941	Published <i>Not by Strange Gods</i> . New York: Viking Press
1941, Mar. 13	Died, Orlando, Fla.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Elizabeth Madox Roberts (1881-1941) span the years 1921-1941, the period during which the Kentucky-born poet and author penned the bulk of her work. Roberts' importance to modern American literature lay in her introspective and poetic style and her influence as a regional writer in southern renaissance literature. The collection contains drafts, notes, outlines, page proofs, and miscellaneous items that shed light on her contribution to the agrarian literary revival of the 1920s and 1930s. The papers are organized into six series: [Novels](#), [Collections of Short Stories](#), [Short Stories](#), [Poetry](#), [Miscellaneous Writings](#), and [Miscellany](#).

The [Novels](#) series contains multiple drafts of Roberts's 1926 book *Time of Man*, including the printer's copy, that includes the author's analysis of its structure and plot and her statement of the circumstances under which it was written. Documentation for Roberts's other books is similar in nature. The series also includes hand-drawn illustrations and research notes on early Kentucky history as well as drafts, notes, and outlines for an unpublished book on the Louisville flood of 1937.

Except for *In the Great Steep's Garden* (1915), all of Roberts's published works are represented in the collection, and because it includes early notes and drafts, variant readings, research material, and statements of the author's purpose, the collection testifies to the conception and development of her entire body of work. The papers further allow for examination into Roberts's literary form and style through the structural analysis and critical study of her published texts. Other items of particular interest include the reminiscences of Roberts's mother describing life in Kentucky before and during the Civil War as recounted in "Life in the Country: Reminiscences," in the [Short Stories](#) series.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in six series:

- [Novels, 1926-1938](#)
- [Collections of Short Stories, 1932-1941](#)
- [Short Stories](#)
- [Poetry, 1922-1940](#)
- [Miscellaneous Writings](#)
- [Miscellany, 1921-1932](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-5	<u>Novels, 1926-1938</u> Drafts, notes, outlines, proofs, and miscellaneous material relating to Roberts's published and unpublished novels. Arranged chronologically by date of creation or publication.
BOX 6	<u>Collections of Short Stories, 1932-1941</u> Drafts of short stories collated as published collections. Arranged chronologically by date of publication.
BOX 6	<u>Short Stories</u> Drafts, notes, outlines, and miscellaneous material relating to individual short story titles. Arranged alphabetically by title.
BOX 7-8	<u>Poetry, 1922-1940</u> Drafts, notebooks, notes, and miscellaneous material relating to published collections of poems and individually titled poems. Collections of poems are arranged chronologically by date of publication; titled poems are arranged alphabetically by title.
BOX 9	<u>Miscellaneous Writings</u> Drafts, notes, and miscellaneous material of unidentified writings. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 10	<u>Miscellany, 1921-1932</u> Correspondence, drawings and sketches, published music score, press clippings, poetry by others, and printed matter. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-5	Novels, 1926-1938 Drafts, notes, outlines, proofs, and miscellaneous material relating to Roberts's published and unpublished novels. Arranged chronologically by date of creation or publication.
BOX 1	1926, <i>Time of Man</i>
BOX 1	Handwritten drafts and notes
BOX 1	Printer's copy
BOX 1	Typescripts
BOX 2	1927, <i>My Heart and My Flesh</i>
BOX 2	Miscellaneous drafts and notes
BOX 2	Typescript
BOX 2	1928, <i>Jingling in the Wind</i> , draft
BOX 3	1930, <i>Great Meadow</i>
BOX 3	Draft
BOX 3	Notes
BOX 3	1931, <i>Buried Treasure</i>
BOX 3	Printer's copy
BOX 3	Typescript
BOX 4	1925, <i>He Sent Forth a Raven</i>
BOX 4	Miscellaneous drafts
BOX 4	Printer's copy
BOX 4	1937, "Louisville Flood," unpublished, drafts, notes, and outlines (2 folders)
BOX 5	1938, <i>Black Is My Truelove's Hair</i>
BOX 5	Drafts
BOX 5	Printer's copy
BOX 5	Typescript
BOX 5	Galley proof
BOX 6	Collections of Short Stories, 1932-1941 Drafts of short stories collated as published collections. Arranged chronologically by date of publication.
BOX 6	1932, <i>Haunted Mirror</i> , printer's draft copy
BOX 6	1941, <i>Not by Strange Gods</i>
BOX 6	Short story drafts
BOX 6	Typescript
BOX 6	Short Stories Drafts, notes, outlines, and miscellaneous material relating to individual short story titles. Arranged alphabetically by title.

Short Stories

Container

Contents

BOX 6	"Battle of the Giants" and "The Poet," drafts
BOX 6	"Children of the Earth," draft
BOX 6	"From Morning until Evening," drafts and notes
BOX 6	"The House Torn Down," drafts, notes, and outlines
BOX 6	"Life in the Country: Reminiscences," draft (2 folders)
BOX 7-8	Poetry, 1922-1940 Drafts, notebooks, notes, and miscellaneous material relating to published collections of poems and individually titled poems. Collections of poems are arranged chronologically by date of publication; titled poems are arranged alphabetically by title.
BOX 7	Collections
BOX 7	1922, <i>Under the Tree</i> , drafts and notebooks
BOX 7	1940, <i>Song in the Meadow</i>
BOX 7	Miscellaneous drafts and notes (3 folders)
BOX 7	Printer's copy
BOX 7	Typescript
BOX 7	Poems
BOX 7	"Jack the Giant Killer," draft
BOX 8	Miscellaneous
BOX 8	Drafts and notes (7 folders)
BOX 8	Notebook
BOX 9	Miscellaneous Writings Drafts, notes, and miscellaneous material of unidentified writings. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 9	Drafts and notes (6 folders)
BOX 10	Miscellany, 1921-1932 Correspondence, drawings and sketches, published music score, press clippings, poetry by others, and printed matter. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 10	Correspondence, 1921-1932
BOX 10	Drawings and sketches
BOX 10	Music, "Mr. Wells," published score, 1924
BOX 10	Newspaper clippings
BOX 10	Poetry by others
BOX 10	Printed matter
BOX 10	University of Kentucky, Lexington, Ky., yearbook, 1925